



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Audubon Society

Sept. - Oct. 2003

A Six-pack To Go

Local birder's insatiable quest for "lifers" takes him on the road to Arizona

by Jack Cole

I should have been content. No, I WAS content! In April, eight of us toured the grouse/prairie chicken circuit in Colorado, and I saw all four of my target life birds, including the Black Rosy Finch. It was a wonderful trip, full of great fun, awesome scenery and memorable experiences.

After two more non-birding trips (is there such a thing?) to Hawaii and Michigan, I finally had time to resume cruising the hot lines, and Whoa!!! Look what's happening in Arizona! A staggering total of SIX rare life birds were calling me, and when I mentioned the possibility of chasing them, my wife, bless her heart, said, "Have a nice time."

Immediately I set the wheels in motion. First I e-mailed George West (ABA's *Birder's Guide to Alaska*), and inquired about the likelihood of seeing all six birds. George said, "Come on down!" and that was all it took for me to call the airlines and make reservations for six days, one day per bird. I then made copies of site locations, maps, sighting reports and any other information I could glean from the NM/AZ listserv. Armed with this and an Arizona birding guide, I left San Jose on June 14th for the heat of the desert and the heat of battle.

I rented a high-clearance SUV as recommended and headed straight for California Gulch, a two-hour drive south of Tucson.

After leaving civilization behind in Arivaca, the last half of the drive was down a road that obviously doubled as a rocky stream bed. I arrived at the old Oro Blanco Mine site around 6

PM, where two other birders were parked, ready and waiting for my first target bird, the **Buff-collared Nightjar**. At 8:08 PM, as I was standing in the road, a nightjar called about 20 feet away, then flew past me down the road. Not much of a look, but it was going to have to do. We relocated it by its constant calling for ten minutes, saw the reflective eyes, and then all was quiet. The two birders left, and I rolled up the windows, locked the doors, and settled in for a long, anxious night of very little sleep.

At 5 AM I was at the southern entrance to California Gulch. There was enough daylight to start a walk up the gulch, watching and listening for target bird #2, the **Five-striped Sparrow**. I walked up the gulch and back, and then did it again. Varied Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks and other birds were active and singing, but not the sparrows. With some disappointment, I left after a few hours for my next stop, Patagonia.

I parked at the famous rest stop, walked across the road and along the fence, stopped at the cairn with the branch pointing toward the creek, lifted my bins, and there they were: target birds #3, the male and female **Rose-throated Becard** actively building their nest. I figured I was due an easy one! I spent the

remainder of the day at the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and Paton's, where up to four Violet-crowned Hummingbirds were being seen. (Incidentally, the Paton home will be up for sale.

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General Membership Meeting "Wildlife of Antarctica" with Eric Preston

Palo Alto Arts Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds.

Wednesday, Sept. 17

Doors open 7:30; program 8:00

Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean are home to thousands of penguins, albatrosses, petrels, seals, whales and spectacular scenery. Intrepid birder and photographer Eric Preston spent a month on the Southern Ocean visiting the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, and the Antarctic Peninsula. Join him for a slide presentation of birds, seals, whales, mountains and ice taken during his 26-day voyage on the sea. He will also discuss the current environmental issues affecting the Southern Ocean and their impact on the rest of the planet.

Eric is a San Francisco resident who has been a serious birder since age 5 and photographing the natural world since he was a teenager. His photos are stunning, according to all the people at Golden Gate Audubon who saw his program last spring, so don't miss this one!

*Wildlife
Education Day*

Sat. Oct. 4

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◆ *Open House for
new members—Page 4*

◆ *Eastern Kingbird!
—Field Notes, Page 6*

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local forest birds—Page 8*

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Sept. - Oct. 2003 Field Trips

Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing.

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

NF = No facilities available

Saturday Sept. 6, 9:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768. From Hwy 101 in Mt. View take San Antonio Rd. north to Terminal Way parking area. Meet at entrance nearest San Antonio Rd. Trip recommended for, but not limited to, beginning birders.

Sunday Sept. 7, 8:30 AM Grant Ranch County Park

Half day. Leader: Dave Cook (408) 275-1492. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and go approx. 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot located on left after you pass main park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Sept. 10, 9:00 AM Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough

Half day. Leader: Shirley Gordon (408) 996-9863. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Gulls, terns, ducks, shorebirds, raptors. **LO, RC**

Saturday Sept. 13, 9:00 AM Point Reyes

Full day. Leader: Peter LaTourrette (650) 961-2741. The west coast's most active vagrant trap, where birds and the weather are always exciting and unpredictable! From Hwy 1 in Marin Co. take Sir Francis Drake Blvd west approx. 14 miles and turn left to Drake's Beach; meet in parking area. Bring lunch, liquids, full tank of gas and be ready for fog, wind, sun and lots of difficult to ID birds. Carpool from Drake's Beach.

Sunday Sept. 14, 8:00 AM Moss Landing & vicinity

Half day plus. Leader: Todd Newberry, Santa Cruz Bird Club (831) 426-8741. Meet near kiosk on Jetty Rd. off Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Preliminary itinerary: Jetty Rd., Moon Glow Dairy, Elkhorn Slough Reserve HQ (possible small fee), Kirby Park, and, time permitting, Harkin Slough. A legendary birding hot spot at one of its best seasons. Dress in layers, bring lunch & water. Shorebirds, early waterfowl migrants.

Saturday Sept. 20, 8:30 AM Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right toward Model Airplane Park

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(street unnamed). Follow road for 1/2 mile, park in gravel lot at first bend in road (meet at gate if entrance is locked).

Sunday Sept. 21, 8:30 AM Coyote Hills Regional Park

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408) 257-3647. Take Hwy 84 (Dumbarton Bridge) east to Newark. Exit right at Thornton, then go left over freeway as Thornton becomes Paseo Padre; turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd. into park. Meet at far end of Quarry parking lot on left, 1/4 mile past entrance. Entrance fee probable. **LO, RC**

Wednesday Sept. 24, 8:30 AM Palo Alto Baylands

Leaders: Rosalie Lefkowitz (650) 494-6358 and Phyllis Browning (650) 494-6360. From Hwy 101 take Embarcadero Rd. east taking a left turn where road forks just past airport. Meet in parking lot across from Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center. Shorebirds, fall warblers. Bring scopes if you have them. **LO**

Saturday Sept. 27, 8/9 AM Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands

Full day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. To carpool meet at Page Mill Rd/I-280 Park 'n' Ride at 8:00. All others meet at tunnel entrance near parking area on Hawk Hill at around 9:00. Directions to Hawk Hill: after crossing Golden Gate Bridge exit just past Vista Pt., cross under Hwy 101 and turn right just before entrance back onto 101 south. Drive up hill to highest point and park. Migrating raptors including possible Broad-winged Hawk. Weather conditions highly variable—dress in layers; bring lunch and liquids. Additional Hawk Hill trip on Oct 4. Heavy fog may change itinerary.

Sunday Sept. 28, 8:30 AM Arastradero Preserve

Half day. Leader: Jim Liskovec (650) 969-5542. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west approx. 1/2 mile to Arastradero Rd. Turn right and meet at parking lot 1/2-mile on right. Variety of woodland and grassland species; a good assortment of raptors possible. Two miles of moderate walking. **RC**

Saturday Oct. 4, 9:00 AM Hawk Hill/Marin Headlands

Full day. Leader: Don Schmoltdt (916) 739-8821. Meet at tunnel entrance near parking area on Hawk Hill (see directions under Sept. 27 listing). Weather conditions highly variable—dress in layers; bring lunch and liquids. Variety of migrating raptors. Heavy fog may change itinerary.

Sunday Oct. 5, 9:00 AM Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Dick Stovel (650) 856-6105. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San

Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mt. View. Birding will be geared toward the beginning birder but all are encouraged to attend. Bring your spotting scope and a friend.

Wednesday Oct. 8, 8:30 AM Ogier Ponds

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. See directions under Sept. 20 listing.

Saturday Oct. 11, 8:30 AM Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Grant Webb (408) 578-0409. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward hills, turn left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd. and continue into park. Meet in Rustic Lands parking area on right just before "T" intersection and underpass. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Possible entrance fee. **LO, RC**

Sunday Oct. 12, 8:30 AM Carmel River

Half day plus. Leader: Kathy Parker (408) 358-2832. Take Hwy 1 south to Carmel, turn left at Rio Rd., then immediately turn right into Crossroads Shopping Center. Meet near Crossroads Cinema at back of shopping center near river. After birding Carmel River and lagoon we'll chase locally reported vagrants in nearby areas. Bring lunch and liquids or buy food at meeting place. Temperatures vary, so bring extra layers of clothing. Rubber boots opt. (there may be puddles in the riverbed).

Saturday Oct. 18, 8:30 AM Windy Hills OSP

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. Meet in parking lot at Sausal Point edge of Preserve. From I-280 in Portola Valley take Alpine Rd. south (toward hills) about 2.9 miles to first stop sign, Portola Rd., turn right and go 0.8 miles to parking lot on left side of road just past The Sequoias. **RC**

Sunday Oct. 19, 8:00 AM Local Hot Spots

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Meet at Alviso Marina. From Hwy 237 in San Jose take Gold St. north to end of street, bear left on Elizabeth St. and then right on Hope St. to Marina parking lot. A chance to visit some of the local hot spots you hear about and, we hope, to see some "good" birds.

Wednesday Oct. 22, 8:30 AM Arastradero Preserve

Half day. Leader: Alberta Jasberg (650) 493-9546. Moderate walking of 2 to 3 miles. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west, turn right on Arastradero Rd. (approx. 1/2 mile) and meet in parking lot, 1/2 mile on right. **RC**

Field Trips *continued*

Saturday Oct. 25, 8:30 AM
Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility
Half day. Leader: TBD, questions call (408) 253-7527. From Hwy 101 take Hwy 237 east, exit north on Caribbean Dr., turn right on Borregas Ave then left to parking area. A great place to study ducks. Scopes recommended. A fairly easy but long walk. **RC**

Sunday Oct. 26, 9:00 AM
Western San Francisco
Half day. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. **Note: Change in Daylight Savings Time, fall back or be an hour early for this trip.** From I-280 take 19th Ave to Golden Gate Park. When you enter the park on 19th Ave, be in left lane and take Crossover Dr. to 25th Ave to Geary Blvd, then left on Geary. Meet in parking lot at Mirrie Way above Sutro Baths and Cliff House. **RC**

Saturday Nov. 1, 8:00 AM
Charleston Slough
Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mt. View. All are invited but trip is designed for beginners. Spotting scopes helpful.

Sunday Nov. 2, 8:00 AM
Moss Landing, Elkhorn Slough, Moon Glow Dairy, Zmudowski State Beach & Pajaro River Mouth.
Half day plus. Leader: Rick Fournier (831) 632-2473. Meet in parking lot on ocean side of Hwy 1 just north of Elkhorn Slough bridge in Moss Landing (used to be Maloney's Restaurant). Trip begins along coast then into Elkhorn Slough for returning ducks, shorebirds, wintering land birds, vagrants. After lunch at Phil's Snack Shack trip finishes early afternoon. Bring food, liquids; dress in layers. **RC**

"Cargill Saltponds Photo Tour" with John Cang **Wednesday Oct. 15**

NOTE NEW LOCATION: Campbell Community Center, Rm. 80
1 West Campbell Ave., corner of Winchester
7:30 Hospitality, 8:00 program

John Cang is a top wildlife and nature photographer, based right here in San Jose. National Geographic, Sierra Club, and Nature Conservancy, among others, have published his photographs. John also enjoys teaching the art of nature photography through workshops, tours, and slide presentations. A sample of John's beautiful photography can be seen on his website www.johncangphoto.com.

Along with his marvelous photos, John will outline a brief history of the salt ponds, and their role as feeding and nesting sites for local and migratory birds. The ponds that he photographed have never been open to the public and they have since been sold to the US/CA governments for restoration to tidal marsh. His presentation also features bird photos from Palo Alto Baylands and Charleston Slough, with habitat similar to the salt ponds. It will be a very exciting program for our Audubon chapter and we hope to get a good turnout from the South County crowd, since it will be in Campbell!

Events Calendar

Tuesday Sept. 2, 7:30 AM
Board of Directors meeting, McClellan Ranch Park.

Wednesday Sept. 3, 7:30 PM
Bay Area Bird Photographers present the annual Members' Slides program. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Tuesday Sept. 9, 9:30 AM
Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Summer birding experiences.

Saturday Sept. 13, 9:00 AM
Creek Group Workshop McClellan Ranch Conference Room. RSVP to main office (408) 252-3747 if planning to attend.

Wednesday Sept. 17, 7:30 PM
General membership meeting, Palo Alto. Program starts at 8:00.

Tuesday Sept. 23, 7:00 PM
Cavity-nesters Recovery Program Annual Meeting, McClellan Ranch Conference Room. RSVP to main office (408) 252-3747 if planning to attend.

Wednesday Sept. 24, 10:00 AM
Coffee Hour and Bird Chat, Nature Shop, McClellan Ranch.

Wednesday Oct. 1, 7:30 PM
Bay Area Bird Photographers presents (TBA). Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Saturday Oct. 4, 10 AM - 2 PM
Wildlife Education Day, McClellan Ranch Park.

Tuesday Oct. 7, 7:30 PM
Board of Directors meeting, McClellan Ranch.

Monday Oct. 13, 9:00 AM
Creek Group Conference, McClellan Ranch.

Tuesday Oct. 14, 9:30 AM
Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Ring-necked Pheasant.

Wednesday Oct. 15, 7:30 PM
General Membership meeting, Campbell (NOT Palo Alto). Program starts at 8. See description below left.

Wednesday Oct. 22, 10:00 AM
Coffee Hour and Bird Chat, Nature Shop, McClellan Ranch.

Shorebird class

SCVAS is offering a Beginning Shorebirds class with popular instructor Les Chibana. This course will build and improve your understanding and identification of Bay Area shorebirds. Slide presentations and sound recordings will be supplemented by handouts. Species studied will be limited to the more common shorebirds that occur locally.

The course consists of four two-hour classroom sessions at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino from 7-9 PM on Thursdays, 10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/30. An optional field trip is available through BirdNUTZ on Sat. 10/25 at a reduced fee for class participants. **Maximum:** 16 students. **Fee:** Members, \$45; Non-Members, \$55 To sign up, contact our office at (408) 252-3747. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds.

Les Chibana has taught birding for over 8 years. His 25+ years of birding avocation has been fed by 9 years of migrant bird-banding and over 10 years photographing birds. His bird guiding and field trip business, BirdNUTZ, provides Bay Area and visiting birders with opportunities to discover our exceptional birding areas.

Volunteer Ventures

by Jennifer Peritz
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

Along with Labor Day, Halloween, and the changes in the leaves, autumn brings many things. One thing that SCVAS always gears up for during the months of September and October is the start of the new school year. As you may have read in the last edition of the *Avocet*, SCVAS' Education Programs are really taking off! The Education Committee has set some strong goals, and we need your help as volunteers to reach them.

One such goal is to offer multiple exposures to the various classrooms that we visit. This means that we need volunteers to offer one of our presentations or slideshows on a quarterly basis. Topics include: Birds Around Us; Cavity-nesting Birds; Birds of Prey; Bird Skins and Nests; and more. Each topic is written for the elementary school level and is accompanied by background information or a script, so that even the most novice of birders can easily present them. All volunteers are trained and teamed with another volunteer to ensure their confidence when first presenting.

The school year also signals the fall season of our Wetland Discovery Program field trips. Bringing in new field trip leaders is essential to the success of the program. Either in the classroom or out in the field, this unique, hands-on learning program allows you to share your love and respect of the natural environment with local 4th-6th graders. We are currently seeking birders of all levels to assist in this year's In-class and Field Trip Programs. This program, which will start in mid-October, requires training, so now is the perfect time to get involved. For more details or to view our Volunteer Video, contact me at the number below. We are also seeking a paid intern to help coordinate this project during the fall and/or spring season. If you know someone with an education or environmental science background who would be available to commit 10-15 hours per week, please let me know!

As October arrives, the Education Committee will be turning its efforts toward our largest annual event – Wildlife Education Day. This, the twelfth year, promises to be bigger than ever with more interactive booths, more attendees, more presentations, and some special new additions.

On Wildlife Education Day, October 4 from 10-2, volunteers will help build nestboxes, lead nature walks, and assist in other interactive activities such as our nature scavenger hunt or potting plants. Volunteers are also needed to help with the logistics of set-up, clean-up, and "behind the scenes" work. In addition to the big day, volunteers are also needed prior to the event – preparing handouts, publicizing the event, compiling a mailing, and most importantly reaching out to teachers and their students to inform them of the California Native Habitats Poster contest. If this sounds of interest or if you have questions about how you might be able to help, please feel free to contact me with questions.

For information on how YOU can become a volunteer, please contact Jennifer at (408) 252-3740 or programs@scvas.org.

Open House for New Members

The Membership Committee is once again hosting the semi-annual open house for new members. This program will help members who have joined in the past year to find out what SCVAS is all about, and provide an opportunity to meet other new members.

Our next open house is on Saturday, September 20 at 9:30 AM at our chapter headquarters in McClellan Ranch Park (see map on back). First, we will go on a short bird walk around the park. The park is bordered by a stream and contains an old orchard, open grassy areas, a bluebird house trail and a community garden, so there is a good opportunity for many different species. After the walk we will serve coffee, tea and bagels in our meeting room. Some members of the Board of Directors and different committees will be on hand for you to discuss different programs we have, and also to hear your ideas. The SCVAS library (which is improving daily, I might add) and the Nature Shop (buy your SCVAS logo attire, bird seed, field guides and see new items we have added) will also be open for you to peruse.

So grab your binoculars (or borrow ours!) and spend a couple hours getting acquainted with SCVAS. We are very excited about meeting our new members in person, so we hope you will be able to attend.



The Audubon Nature Shop at McClellan Ranch Park is a perfect setting for our SCVAS office. The park is bordered by a stream and is home to a bluebird trail, old orchard and community gardens; a great habitat for birds.



Live Animals . . . birds, reptiles, and more!

Educational Presentations

Local Environmental Orgs.

Build a Birdhouse

Scavenger Hunt

12th Annual

Make a Bird Feeder
Fabulous Raffle Prizes



Wildlife Education Day



Saturday, October 4, 2003

10am-2pm

McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino

"Early Bird" ~ Shorebird Walk

8:00 am @ Charleston Slough ~ RSVP Required

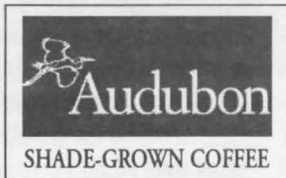
!!! Poster Contest !!!

Deadline -- 9/19, please call (408) 252-3740
or visit the SCVAS website for more details

General Parking @ Monta Vista High School w/ FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE

Disabled Parking ONLY @ McClellan Ranch Park

IN CASE OF RAIN, all activities will be held at Monta Vista High School



You are invited to taste our newest addition to the Nature Shop!

Bird-Chat/Coffee Hour

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 10:00 AM

Join SCVAS members, volunteers and staff as we sip
Audubon Premium 100% Organic
Certified Shade-Grown and
Bird Friendly Arabica Coffee and Lattes
at McClellan Ranch Park.



Bring a friend, discuss the bird activity and share your stories.
Plus receive a 20% discount on any one item in the Nature Shop.

Coffee is available in 12oz. bags!

Birds and Bees are Back at Coyote Point Museum

Refurbished Aviary and New Honeybee Exhibit Grand Opening Celebration October 1

They're back! Walk among the birds and dance with the bees at the grand opening of Coyote Point Museum's refurbished 4,000 square foot walk-through aviary and new honeybee exhibition. The aviary will house over four dozen non-releasable, native California birds and the new honeybee exhibition will be the largest of its kind in the Bay Area.

The aviary is a rare public education and conservation resource, with its raptor area, indigenous songbirds, marsh birds and native plantings. Join us in welcoming back our feathered friends and buzzing buddies. Festivities begin at 10 AM and continue throughout the day with special tours, animal presentations, art workshops and more. 1651 Coyote Point Dr., San Mateo (650) 342-7755.

Native Plant Sale

The California Native Plant Society's annual Fall plant sale will be held October 11 from 10-4 at their nursery at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills. It's a great chance for people who want to add natives to their gardens, and the proceeds go towards the projects of the local CNPS chapter.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Loons through Falcons

An immature **Pacific Loon** was found in San Tomas Aquino Creek above Mission College Boulevard on 9 Jul (ViT) and was seen at least through 12 Jul (v. ob.). The flight feathers were severely abraded, so this loon must have been grounded for some time. **Brown Pelican** numbers started to build in late July with a peak count of 34 on the Alviso salt ponds on 30 Jul (MMR, MJM). An immature Brown Pelican visiting Almaden Lake on 27-28 Jul (AV, JP) was surprising. A ghost from the past, an adult **Little Blue Heron** was found on closed salt ponds in Alviso on 25 Jun (CM). Fortunately for local birders, this heron occasionally foraged in Salt Pond A4, first seen there on 29 Jun (RK, PK). It was observed there through 7 Jul (v. ob.). This species occasionally nested for about 15 years in the now defunct Alviso heronry. Two **White-faced Ibis** were seen at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) waterbird pond on 9 Jun (RWR, FV) and also nearby in a tidal area of Coyote Slough (MJM). Possibly these were part of the May influx. Curiously, at least two birds were found in this area irregularly throughout the summer with observations on 10 Jun (MMR), 12 Jun (AME), 14 Jul in the nearby drying ponds (RWR, FV), and 28-29 Jul (DM). It seems likely that these birds were foraging locally in areas that were difficult of access and only occasionally did they visit the waterbird pond. A male **Eurasian Wigeon** with an injured right wing was seen in outer Guadalupe Slough on 12 Jun (MMR, MJM) and has remained through the period. A male **American Wigeon** first found in the same area in late May has also been seen during the period (MMR, MJM). Another male was seen in the outer Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 18 Jul (MMR). **Blue-winged Teal** are found locally every summer, although there has been no evidence of breeding in decades. A single male was

found in the Palo Alto FCB on 7 Jun (WGB) and a pair of birds were seen in the vicinity of the CCFS waterbird pond 10-13 Jun (MMR, WGB, LSu). One to two male **Green-winged Teal** were observed in the Palo Alto FCB 7-28 Jun (WGB, MMR) and two to four females or immatures were seen in the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh 9-30 Jul (WGB), but no breeding evidence was obtained. Outer Guadalupe Slough seemed to be the duck hospital this summer as one to two male and a female **Canvasback** were found at various times in June and July (MMR, MJM) and most had some sort of injury. A pair of **Redhead** in the Palo Alto FCB on 7 Jun (WGB) was a surprise, but they

An Eastern Kingbird was the first of the fall vagrants

were not seen again during the summer. A drake **Ring-necked Duck** found on Bear Gulch Reservoir on 7 Jun (LBG, DD) was of interest as this duck rarely oversummers. A female or immature **Red-breasted Merganser** found on the Alviso salt ponds on 30 Jul (MMR, MJM) likely oversummered nearby. **Prairie Falcons** nest early in the Diablo Range and disperse immediately afterwards. Nonetheless, one seen in Santa Teresa CP on 10 Jul (AV) is early for a dispersant—they are rare here even in the winter.

Rails through Skimmers

Although **Soras** have nested in the South Bay in recent decades, the conventional wisdom is that they are absent in most summers from mid-April to late-July. Thus, a bird heard on 9 Jul (RWR, FV) near the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) is of considerable interest. Nearly as rare, **Snowy Plovers** are almost extinct as

breeding species in Santa Clara County. A single bird was seen on Salt Pond A8 in Alviso on 16 Jul (MMR, WGB) and three were north of the Alviso Marina on 31 Jul (RWR, FV). All are likely post-breeding dispersants. The three **Lesser Yellowlegs** seen in the Lockheed Martin ponds on 9 Jul (RWR, FV) were the first of the season. A high count of 15 at the Palo Alto Baylands on 23 Jul (JMy) was unusual as this species rarely occurs in tidal areas. A **Solitary Sandpiper** on Calero Reservoir on 30 Jul (AV) is the first autumn bird we've had since 1991. An alternate **Ruddy Turnstone** was found on Salt Pond A16 on 19 Jul (DM) and again on 22 Jul (RWR, FV). Three alternate birds were seen there on 23 Jul (WGB, MMR), but none thereafter. Five **Red Knots** seen in Coyote Slough north of Salt Pond A9 on 26 Jun (MMR, MJM) were unseasonable. Two were in faded alternate plumage and the other three were in basic plumage. The first **Semipalmated Sandpiper** of the season was a juvenile at the CCFS waterbird pond on 26 Jul (MJM). An adult bird was there on 27 Jul (WGB) and another juvenile on 30 Jul (AME). An adult **Baird's Sandpiper** was found at the edge of Salt Pond A15 in Alviso on 30 Jul (MMR, MJM). Almost all of our fall birds are juveniles and there appears to be only one previous adult fall record. Of our common "peeps," oversummering **Dunlin** are least expected so two in Coyote Slough on 26 Jun (MMR, MJM) were unusual. Salt Pond A16 in Alviso has been the center of migrating phalaropes this fall with 1620 **Wilson's** recorded on 24 Jul (JAC) and 840 **Red-necked** on 27 Jul (MJM). **California Gulls** have expanded their breeding range to the northwest by a few hundred meters as precocial young were seen on an islet in the outer Palo Alto FCB on 7 Jun (MMR). The first staging **Least Tern** of the season was over Salt Pond A4 on 3 Jul (WGB). The largest concentration of birds in July was over the Alviso salt ponds with 66+ birds counted on 30 Jul (MMR, MJM). **Black Skimmers** were

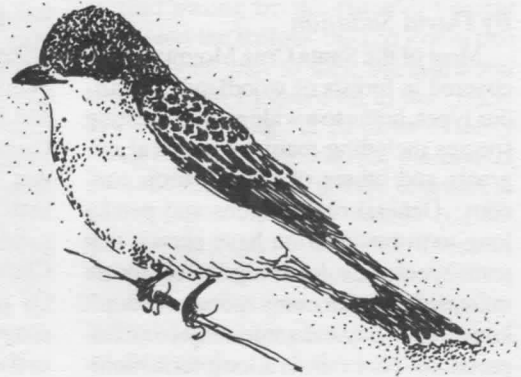
Field Notes *cont'd*

found in a number of South Bay locations this summer. Two adults with a precocial young were seen on an island in Salt Pond A16 on 24 Jun (RWR, FV) and two adults with another precocial young were in the outer Palo Alto FCB on 8 Jul (MMR). The latter location is new for this species.

Roadrunners through Goldfinches

A **Greater Roadrunner** was seen north of Metcalf Road on 27 Jun (WGB), about 0.7 miles from Hwy 101. Scattered observations of **Vaux's Swifts** suggest local breeding including three over Byrne Park on 28 Jun (GHa), one over Arastradero Preserve on 7 Jul (WGB), and three over Monte Bello OSP on 27 Jul (WGB). A male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 5 Jun (RWR, FV). On the Guadalupe River from Curtner to below Malone, up to three males and four females were found from 4 Jul to the end of the month (WGB, JBH, AV, JP, JMy). Two nests were found: one being built on 4 Jul (WGB), which had nestlings by August, and one with nestlings on 27 Jul (JMy). The density of Black-chinneds along this stretch of fairly mature riparian is similar to what Steve Rottenborn found in 1995. [If anyone lives within a block or two of either Guadalupe River or Coyote Creek in San Jose and feeds hummingbirds, I would like to talk to you.] The only report this summer of **Lewis's Woodpecker** was a single bird in San Antonio Valley on 18 Jun (AME). **Pileated Woodpeckers** appear to be expanding their range. Single birds were found at Skyline Ridge OSP on 1 Jun (RWR et al.) and south of 5 Jul (GS) and two were heard in Monte Bello OSP on 7 Jun (GHa). These are all locations where birds have been found before. New areas included Los Gatos Creek above Aldercroft Heights where a male was seen feeding a male and female fledgling on 13 Jun (WGB) and in Foothills Park along Los Trancos Creek where a male was seen on 28 Jul (DLSu). A **Willow Flycatcher** banded at CCFS on 21 Jun (*fide* MJM) was most likely a

late spring migrant. An **Eastern Kingbird** found along Skyline Boulevard not far from Horseshoe Lake on 27 Jul (DLSu) is the sixth county record and the earliest by 19 days. A juvenile **Bank Swallow** seen at the CCFS waterbird pond on 27 Jul (WGB) was probably a dispersant from a Bay Area colony. On the Palo Alto Summer Bird Count, **Pygmy Nuthatches** were found breeding in two new flatland locations this year. Two adults and two nestlings were found in a eucalyptus next to San Francisco Creek near the Stanford West Apartments on 7 Jun (DSt) and were seen there at least through 13 Jun (v. ob.). The same day, two nests were found in adjacent palms at the Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton (LBG, DD). A singing **Swainson's Thrush** along the Guadalupe River below Malone on 4 Jul (WGB) was in an area of riparian where this thrush was once common, but is now exceptionally rare as a breeder. One banded at CCFS on 19 Jul (RCo) had started its pre-basic molt and was probably a failed breeder from some other location. A **Hermit Thrush** along Los Trancos Creek in Foothills Park on 23 Jul (DLSu) was well away from typical breeding habitat and was also likely a dispersant. Four **Phainopepla** in the San Antonio Valley on 18 Jun (AME) was a good count of summer resident birds. Singing **Hermit Warblers** in Sanborn-Skyline CP on 3 Jun (WGB), near Horseshoe Lake in Skyline Ridge OSP on 7 Jun (GHa), and in upper Wunderlich Park on 7 Jun (GGH) are all thought to be part of a local breeding population. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was still singing along Llagas Creek above Bloomfield Road on 14 Jun (KVV), but was not found after that. A very late **White-crowned Sparrow** remained in a Palo Alto yard through 1 Jun (PMB). A male **Blue Grosbeak** was found singing along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 8 Jun (SH), but was not found afterwards. A



"An Eastern Kingbird found along Skyline Boulevard not far from Horseshoe Lake on July 27 is the sixth county record and the earliest by 19 days..."
sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White

pair of **Great-tailed Grackles** nested at the Parkway Lakes again and three fledglings were observed on 15 Jun (MJM). An unusual west side **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was over Arastradero Preserve on 2 Jun (GHa). Two males and a female were at Joseph Grant CP on 25 Jun (WGB).

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), Phyllis Browning (PMB), Jack Cole (JAC), Rita Colwell (RCo), David Drake (DD), Al Eisner (AME), Leda Beth Gray (LBG), Garth Harwood (GHa), Gloria Heller (GGH), Sherry Hudson (SH), John Hutz (JBH), Roland Kenner (RK), Pat Kenny (PK), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Dean Manley (DM), Clyde Morris (CM), Jean Myers (JMy), Janna Pauser (JP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Georgia Stigall (GS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Dick Stovel (DSt), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), Frank Vanslager (FV), Kent Van Vuren (KVV), and Ann Verdi (AV).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, or: barlowi@earthlink.net

Keeping tabs on local forest birds

By David Suddjian

Most of the Santa Cruz Mountains are covered in forests or woodlands of various types, home to a wide array of nesting species including many neotropical migrants and others of conservation concern. General observations and patchy long-term information have shown that some species are declining and others are increasing, but for many species we don't know much beyond some subjective impressions. No extensive, long-term monitoring has occurred in the local forestlands that occupy most of the region. I began the *Santa Cruz County Forest Birds Monitoring Program* (FBMP) in 2002 to help fill this gap and provide long-term monitoring of forest birds breeding in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The ambitious FBMP "saturates" accessible forest areas with survey routes located along roads, trails, creeks and "cross country." It is set up after the fashion of the USGS's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Survey routes include a series of survey points where birds are counted using the point count method, and skilled observers cover each route once a year during late spring. Unlike the much larger scale BBS, which has only three active routes in the Santa Cruz Mountains region, the FBMP has achieved excellent local coverage with a large number of routes in a limited area.

The goals of the FBMP are:

- Provide *long-term* information on trends and changes in distribution, and *short-term* information on the population status and distribution of birds.
- Provide an opportunity for local birders to conducting long-term bird monitoring.
- Provide local birders, through training and field experience, the chance to improve their identification and census skills and to grow in understanding of local forest birds.
- Provide opportunities for local college students to participate in an established local study, offering field survey experience and use of the data for student papers.
- Increase local and regional awareness of the population status and trends of forest birds.
- Publish results locally and for the scientific community.

The FBMP has been supported by grants from the Santa Cruz Bird Club, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and private donations. It began with a focus on Santa Cruz County because that is my home turf, but there is no reason why the effort could not be expanded to include parts of western Santa Clara and southern San Mateo counties. Of interest to SCVAS members, the project already provides some coverage of Santa Clara County, as seven routes run along the county's border, and others come very close.

In 2002 the FBMP surveyed 851 points along 36 routes, and just four observers did all the surveys. Coverage expanded this year to 1,164 points along 51 routes. The pool of observers also grew to 11, with logistical support from several others.

The 2002 surveys tallied 17,124 individuals of 100 local breeding species. Coverage in 2003 added at least seven more local breeding species. Except for a few nocturnal species, the 51 routes are sampling virtually all of the species that breed in association with forests or woodlands in the study region. Table 1 lists some of the more widespread and abundant species recorded on the 2002 surveys.

With only two years of data, it is, of course, too early to comment meaning-

fully on trends. However, the FBMP has already done a great deal to elucidate current patterns of distribution and the relative abundance of species in different areas or habitats. Some of the interesting patterns include: the extensive occurrence of species such as Pileated Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet, patterns of range overlap and co-occurrence of close relatives like Black-throated Gray and Hermit warblers, and the ranges of some species associated primarily with higher elevations. Ranges of locally rare species such as Red-breasted Sapsucker and Varied Thrush are also being documented.

In some ways, the "saturation" coverage at an extensive scale provides better information than breeding bird atlas data on the details of the ranges of some species. The FBMP surveys have a finer scale, and the FBMP covers all areas annually, versus an atlas, where coverage shifts around to different blocks over a number of years. Check the Santa Cruz Bird Club's web site (<http://santacruzbirdclub.org/>) later this fall for a more extensive presentation of the results.

In addition to keeping track of birds, the FBMP has already been a boon for participants who have benefited in a number of ways from the project's training program and the experience of doing the surveys. Here are some comments:

cont'd. next page

Table 1. The most frequently detected and abundant species in 2002

Species detected at the most points	Species with highest cumulative counts
Steller's Jay (83%)	Steller's Jay (1,866)
Chestnut-b. Chickadee (75%)	Chestnut-b. Chickadee (1,400)
Pacific-slope Flycatcher (67%)	Pacific-slope Flycatcher (1,172)
Dark-eyed Junco (58%)	Dark-eyed Junco (849)
American Robin (46%)	Acorn Woodpecker (824)
Brown Creeper (46%)	American Robin (652)
Black-headed Grosbeak (43%)	Brown Creeper (616)
Band-tailed Pigeon (41%)	Band-tailed Pigeon (599)
Spotted Towhee (41%)	Spotted Towhee (566)
Acorn Woodpecker (40%)	Black-headed Grosbeak (554)
Warbling Vireo (40%)	Warbling Vireo (547)
Hutton's Vireo (33%)	Mourning Dove (373)
Mourning Dove (31%)	Hutton's Vireo (373)
Wilson's Warbler (30%)	Wilson's Warbler (363)
Purple Finch (28%)	California Quail (309)

A Six-pack To Go

continued from Page 1

If Tucson Audubon Society doesn't buy it, we will have lost a famous Southeast Arizona institution).

I was asleep by 8 in the Stage Stop Inn, then up at 5 and off to Patagonia Lake State Park, in search of a pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers**. I had a map of previous sightings, but in two hours I had searched in vain for what appeared to be a needle in a haystack. Around 8 AM another birder came along, we set off on a new course, and almost immediately saw a small cairn, then another, and another. Finally we came to a LARGE cairn, obviously the last one, and when we looked up, the male gnatcatcher was ten feet over our heads, carrying food. We backed off so it could feed the female on the nest, exchanged high-fives, and agreed to meet at Beatty's in Miller Canyon the next morning.

I drove to Sierra Vista, and after lunch hiked up the nature trail at Ramsey Canyon. The highlight there was a pair of

Whiskered Screech-owls in a nest just outside the visitor's center. After another night of early to bed - early to rise, I met my new friend at Beatty's, where George West was busy banding hummers. Here my target bird was the **Flame-colored Tanager**, locally dubbed Mr. Wonderful, reported to be easily seen some distance up the trail. Three of us scrambled up to the alleged spot, only to be greeted later on by two sets of birders who reported seeing the tanagers copulating farther down the trail an hour earlier. Bad news. We hustled down to the spot, but the birds were gone. Red-faced Warblers and a White-eared Hummingbird were some consolation, yet my disappointment was tempered by reports of a pair of Flame-colored Tanagers being seen daily in Madera Canyon, my last scheduled stop on the trip.

From Miller Canyon I drove three miles south to the Ash Canyon Bed and Breakfast to see a Lucifer Hummingbird, walked the San Pedro River trail for two hours, and spent the afternoon on Fort Huachuca, driving up to Sawmill Canyon. The highlight here was *three* pair of Elegant Trogons, a bird that's become rather common in most of the canyons. Here also I made a very fortunate acquaintance. Two birders were having lunch at the Garden Canyon picnic area and I stopped to chat with them. One had hired a guide to take him to French Joe Canyon in the morning to hopefully find the **Rufous-capped Warblers**, which was also my destination for target bird #5.

Together we left the Motel 6 at 3:30 AM and met Melody Kehl at the canyon entrance at 4:30. I had seen her at Patagonia Lake and she was happy to have me along. She bounced her Explorer on a white-knuckle ride up the canyon and at 5 we started the ascent up the narrow, thorn-lined trail. It took Melody about ten minutes at the top of the canyon to first hear and then see the birds. There was one nesting pair, with two or three fledged young. On the way back down the road(?), Melody told me where two Five-striped Sparrows were in California Gulch. She said they wouldn't be singing, but if I were to go there again, to stop at the second (dry) stream crossing, listen for a sparrow "chip", and hope it isn't a Rufous-crowned, the only other candidate. That was all I needed to hear.

On my way through Patagonia, I again paid my respects to the becards. If I had

instead swung by the Paton's, I might have seen the Rufous-backed Robin that paid a brief visit to their backyard that morning, but I pushed on to the Gulch, this time entering via 10 miles of dusty but scenic Ruby Road from the east. I arrived around 1 PM, not the best time to be birding in the desert heat of 102 degrees in the shade. In the Gulch there was no shade. I settled beside a tall rock with my back to the sparrow hillside with a gallon of water, prepared to wait until the relative coolness of the late afternoon. After an hour of listening and waiting, I heard a single "chip" behind me. With my heart in my throat, I peered around the rock, and there, on a bush not 30 feet up the hillside, was a beautiful Five-striped Sparrow. Hallelujah! I was back on track for my six-pack quest, with only the reliable tanager to go.

I skipped back to my car as lightly as the blazing sun would allow, and wrestled my way out of the gulch once more. I arrived at the Madera Kubo Cabins in Madera Canyon at 4:30, and said, "OK, tanager, here I am." Unfortunately, the tanager wasn't listening, and I sat around for three hours without hearing or seeing any kind of tanager at all. I stayed for the Elf Owl and Poor-will/Whip-poor-will show, then dragged my weary, hungry body down to my motel in Green Valley.

Not to worry, I assured myself, the bird will surely be calling early in the morning. So I was back on site at 5:30, and this time it took exactly 8 minutes to first hear and then see the male Flame-colored Tanager! Six days, six birds in the bag! Mission accomplished. After my first decent breakfast of the trip, I decided to look for a Yellow Grosbeak, and sure enough, I found one at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum where I saw my first one 17 years ago. I had lunch with a Cactus Wren, and then retreated to the coolness of the airport to await my flight home.

Here's where a little ESP would have been a good thing, as on this day a Plain-capped Starthroat made its first (return?) appearance at the Ash Canyon Bed and Breakfast. But that's a bird for another day. Who knows? Maybe it will become part of the next six-pack!

If you are interested in seeing my trip list of 117 species, e-mail me at snoyowl@yahoo.com and I'll send it to you. Good Birding, everyone!

—Jack Cole

Forest Birds *cont'd*

"The training sessions taught me a lot, both with birds I don't see very often and some holes that I had in my knowledge. It is very satisfying to me to be able to identify sounds, whether I am doing a survey or not. It is a different way of appreciating and knowing nature, and it really adds to my enjoyment of a walk, a hike, or a camping trip.

—Leda Beth Gray, Ben Lomond

"The surveys challenged my field skills in ways that were fundamentally different from the usual birding excursion. It was necessary to depend strongly on identifying sounds of unseen birds. I had to focus on finding birds at varying distances, and search for common species as well as the interesting unusual species. The timed nature of the surveys and progress along the survey route added another dimension to it all, and I came to liken the surveys to a "birdathlon," balancing field identification, attention, and physical stamina."

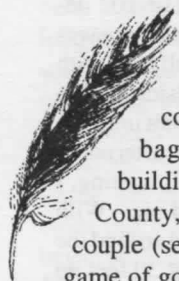
—Les Chibana, Palo Alto

Please contact me at dsuddjian@aol.com if you are interested in joining the FBMP in 2004, or if you'd like to discuss possibilities of expanding coverage into Santa Clara County.

Teed off at links developers

Poorly planned courses pose major problems

by Craig Breon
SCVAS Executive Director



Ok, let's just start with the disclaimers. I have nothing against golfers. As for golf courses, well, they are a mixed bag. We have opposed the building of a few golf courses in the County, and we have supported a couple (see below). I neither hate the game of golf nor do I think that all golf courses are malignant.

That said, what is it with golf course developers? Do they actually think that the game is so sacrosanct that rules applicable to us normal human beings mean nothing to them? So it would seem.

The Institute

John Fry, of Fry's Electronics fame, built a golf course on the outskirts of Morgan Hill. Unfortunately, he couldn't be bothered to get the permits needed to do so. No approval from the Morgan Hill City Council, no Environmental Impact Report (EIR), no permits from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, or the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Don't bother letting those pesky neighbors and the public comment on the idea, as the law requires. Just build it and see what everyone says later.

Called the Institute Golf Course, this is supposed to be adjunct to a math institute Fry intends to build on the same site (which, by the way, may be a nearly 60,000 square foot structure modeled after the Alhambra, a Moorish castle in southern Spain—for a rendering, see www.aimath.org). Math geeks unite! Now you have the ultimate site to work out complicated theoretical formulas in the morning then, as we all know mathematicians require, hit the links in the afternoon. In reality, Fry seems to have designed the course not so much for mathematicians as for future PGA tournaments, although this is not admitted

in documents submitted to Morgan Hill.

As if the bold illegality of Fry's actions were not enough, the Institute adds insult to injury by being the longest course in Santa Clara County, which raises additional issues. Here's a short list of problems with the Institute, according to Morgan Hill's own documents:

- Potential poisoning of local groundwater wells with levels of nitrogen fertilizer three times higher than drinking water quality standards (and people in the area do drink this groundwater);
- Increased local flooding due to runoff from the course and changes to drainage in the area;
- Significant impact on availability of local groundwater due to the huge amount of water needed to maintain the immense acreage of turf grass on the site (far more than a typical golf course);
- Habitat destruction for the threatened Red-legged frog and other wildlife.

These and many other significant environmental impacts are due primarily to two factors: first, that the course has too much turf, which requires more intensive chemical maintenance and watering; and second, that it's been done illegally, without the advice or restraints of natural resource agencies, planners, the public, or experienced local advocates from conservation organizations like SCVAS.

What can we do about this? Well, Morgan Hill is now requiring an after-the-fact EIR—that's a start. Meanwhile, Audubon and the Committee for Green Foothills filed a formal code enforcement complaint with the city, demanding that the course be shut down until all the appropriate permits are acquired. As a result, the city recently sent the Institute a letter requiring it to "cease operations," although the letter is so vague as to be near useless. We have also written to relevant government agencies asking that they fully enforce environmental laws for both past and ongoing violations.

Frankly, that may not be enough. As it turns out, John Fry is influential in Morgan Hill. Fry, his family, and Fry's Electronics executives and their families

have made strategic and sizable donations to political and charitable organizations in Morgan Hill. We are concerned that this flow of money is intended to convince the Morgan Hill City Council to overlook his illegalities and permit the course as is. To date, the Council has been oddly silent on this serious undermining of the planning process and the potential harm to people and wildlife in the area.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

There's a bit of a Wild West feel to some of this lawlessness. The Corde Valle Golf Course near San Martin, formerly known as Lion's Gate, finds more scofflaws at play. In 1996, I worked with the County, the golf course developers, and the public to try to create one of the more beautiful and environmentally responsible golf courses in the County. I had just finished serving on a county task force drafting guidelines for golf courses locally. The task force worked for several months, visited examples of good and bad courses, and came up with pretty good guidelines. Lion's Gate was the first to go through analysis under those guidelines. After a lot of work, we felt pleased with the results.

Then they just didn't bother to do any of it. It appears that for a year or two they retained the necessary consultants to do the monitoring and reporting needed for environmental compliance, then they just stopped. Evidently, doing what they promised the county, and thus the people, was either too expensive for them, or they didn't think they would be caught, or they just didn't care. Out of 29 commitments relating to natural resources—recently documented by the Department of Fish and Game—they seem to have done about six. The rest were either not done, not done well, or we can't even tell because they never filed the necessary reports.

This all came to light after Barry Witt, golf course columnist for the *Mercury News*, uncovered another violation of their permit. In 1996 the County Board had required that 60% of the golf rounds played be reserved for the general public.

Despite this condition, when Mr. Witt called to arrange a tee time, he was told that the course was private, members and guests only.

Why would it matter to Audubon whether a golf course is public or private? First, courses use public resources, like lots of water, and have impacts on other public resources, like streams and wildlife. So the general public should receive a benefit in exchange. Second, if a course remains private, then there is that much more pressure from your average golfer to build more public courses in the county, leading to more disturbance of natural lands and resources. Third, when you make a promise to the people of this county, you ought to keep that promise. This, they did not. The *Mercury* exposed this fact, and the County Planning Commission commenced hearings to either modify or revoke Corde Valle's permit. In the course of these hearings regarding the issue of "public play," the environmental violations also came to light.

What happens from here is up to the County Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors . . . and you and me? In the last year, I have appeared four times in front of the Commission, urging it to bring Corde Valle into compliance with its permits. So far, progress has been made, but issues remain outstanding.

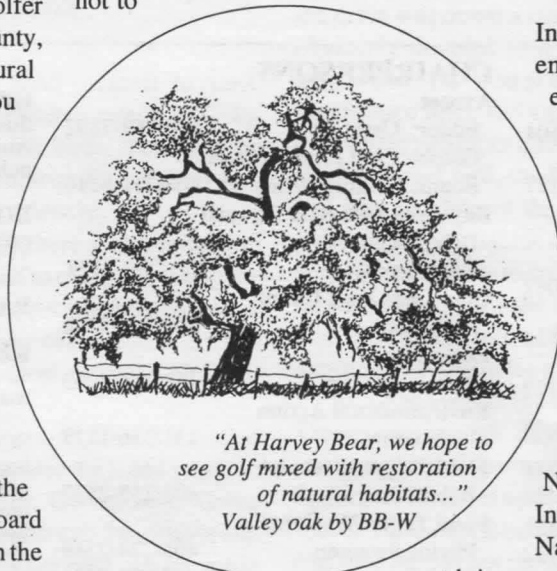
It comes down to this—if Corde Valle is required to comply with the permit condition regarding public play, then members who paid millions based on claims of an "exclusive," private course will likely sue the current owners of Corde Valle. In a near panic, those owners have hired quite a team of lawyers and lobbyists to claim that they are not in violation, which is laughable. Secondly, in exchange for relief from this permit condition, they have offered to create a Youth Golf Foundation, to pay for underprivileged kids to learn the game of golf—mostly by playing at courses other than Corde Valle.

To give them the meager credit that they are due, the Corde Valle owners seem to be on a path to come into compliance with many of the environmental conditions in their permit. Most recently, I have asked the Planning Commission to require additional

measures from Corde Valle, to compensate our local natural resources for the lost value resulting from six years or so of broken promises.

Harvey Bear—The Better Side of Golf

The County is putting the finishing touches on a Master Plan for its newest park—Coyote Lake/Harvey Bear Ranch near San Martin. Plans include a public golf course in the "West Flats" area of Harvey Bear. Some time ago, we agreed not to



oppose t h i s golf course if the County would commit to making the course a model of environmentally responsible design and management. To date, the County appears to be fulfilling that commitment.

At Harvey Bear, we hope to see golf mixed with restoration of natural habitats (the lands were degraded over time by grazing and agriculture). If turf grass is minimized, there's ample room for restoration of riparian areas, oak savannah, and niche habitats for rare species, perhaps including Burrowing Owl, Western pond turtle, and bats. Further, we expect course management to minimize chemical input and perhaps include the use of recycled water. Some use of solar energy and "green" building materials would be nice as well. Most recently, I have written to the County Parks Commission, asking that it appoint one or more local conservationists to be included in the design team for the course, ensuring that these concepts will become integral to that design, rather than afterthoughts.

Unfortunately, the West Flats area of Harvey Bear sits adjacent to John Fry's Institute golf course. Questions arise as to whether the local groundwater table and stream system can accommodate two courses adjacent to each other. More analysis of this is needed in the environmental documents for both courses, but it would be a shame if an illegally built, private course were to interfere with the County's good intentions to build a model public course.

If you want to learn more about the Institute, Corde Valle, or Harvey Bear, email me at craig@scvas.org. I am especially interested in hearing from those of you who would like to help us achieve our goals relative to these courses.

One Last, Irksome Note

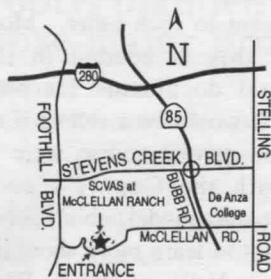
I recently received a call from Cupertino's Parks Department director asking about the "Audubon golf program." This question has been a thorn in my side for a decade. For the record, the Audubon Society of New York State and Audubon International are not affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Instead, they are affiliated with golf course developers and owners. Essentially, these organizations sell information to golf courses about how to make their courses more environmentally responsible.

Nothing wrong with that. However, by then certifying those courses as "Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries" without actually requiring that they employ many good design and management practices, these two bogus Audubons provide a patina of environmentalism on what are often damaging courses. On more than one occasion I have appeared in front of a local government opposing a golf course development, only to have the golf course developer say something like, "I don't know why the local Audubon Society is criticizing our plans when we are working with Audubon to make this a model course." The decision makers are understandably confused by this tactic, and I'm left explaining the difference between those organizations and the true Audubon.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
 22221 McClellan Road
 Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: 408-252-3747
 Fax: 408-252-2850
 E-mail: scvas@scvas.org

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Programs Coordinator 408/252-3740
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Office Fax 408/252-2850
E-mail scvas@scvas.org
Website www.scvas.org

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KEEPING CONNECTED: E-mail us at <e-network@scvas.org> so we can send informative brief notes of special concern.

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The Avocet is published bi-monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, address is above. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send submissions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

2003 Volume 50, Number 5

Chapter Members in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) receives the SCVAS newsletter, *The Avocet*

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